

Gaa - Miskwaabikaang

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2024



For The Tribal Membership
Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Boozhoo Aaniin Gaa-Miskwaabikaang, it is my honor to present this annual report on the Tribe's operations and accomplishments over the past year. This report will focus on the Tribe's happenings during 2024.

During the October 2023 - September 2024 fiscal year, this Administration's priority has been spending quality time with the youth, elders, staff, and all our partners to carry out the mission of our great nation while holding us all accountable to the membership's needs, improving our systems of care, protecting our lands, and exercising our Treaty Rights and sovereignty.

Cultural engagement continued to be the persistent priority with record breaking participation at the annual July Pow Wow, Winter Camp, Language Camp, and many other tribal events. "Minawaananigwad!"—it is so exciting.

Land leases—We hear you telling us that our lands are precious, we take pride in them, and you want them cleaned up. This also means people must be held accountable for their actions of abandoning property and waste, and that you must be ready to be a responsible lease holder. We will continue to work with the land office, environmental department, home-ownership programs and the courts to ensure this work continues.

Education—The investments in language and culture are having significant impacts in developing highly skilled speakers and teachers, passing on traditional knowledge to our youth, and our tribal membership healing together through our way of life. For the first time ever, the School District of Bayfield launched an Ojibwemowin Immersion classroom in kindergarten, and this could not have been done without the voices of our community and dedication of the teachers.

Housing—This has been the center of attention for many tribal staff and contractors this past year. As we approach several projects being completed, we are simultaneously developing property management capacity and focusing on quality living and homes for future new renters and home owners.

Health and wellbeing—I'm proud to share that the Health Services Division has made great strides towards fiscal goals established which help focus more on patient care and less on administrative burdens related to grant management. We will continue to prioritize mental health and AODA programming that emphasizes best practices and meets the needs of our membership.

Debt Service—This includes the extreme generosity of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Nation who we have outstanding loans with for the Health Center and Casino Resort. While the Health Center has been an A+ borrower, we cannot say the same for the Casino who has not been able to pay the debt service consistently. The membership has vocalized that maintaining the operations of the Casino Resort is a priority because of its economic potential. While we are still struggling to find qualified management staff and the best business model, finding the solutions to the debt service remain necessary.

In closing, it has been my honor and privilege to serve alongside the dedicated tribal staff, committee volunteers and those who care deeply about our membership's wellbeing. I will continue to represent Red Cliff the best I can and remain committed to the hard work for our current and future generations.

Miigwech,
Nicole L. Boyd
Tribal Council Chairwoman





TRIBAL COUNCIL

Gaa-Miskwaabikaang is governed by an elected nine-member Tribal Council. Each council member serves a two-year term. Elections occur annually in May and July. Council meetings are held twice per month and are open to community members. Meeting information can be found on the Tribe’s website.

The Tribal Council works to promote, plan, and provide for the health, welfare, education, environmental protection, cultural preservation and economic wellbeing of tribal members and to protect treaty rights now and in the future.



NICOLE BOYD

*Chairwoman
Term Expires July 2025*

RICHARD PETERSON

*Vice Chair
Term Expires July 2026*

BUTCH BRESSETTE

*Secretary
Term Expires July 2026*

LAURA GORDON

*Treasurer
Term Expires July 2025*

DAVID CURRAN

*Member At-Large
Term Expires July 2025*

BRYAN BAINBRIDGE

*Member At-Large
Term Expires July 2025*

SHANIA NORDBY

*Member At-Large
Term Expires July 2026*

ANGIE LAPOINTE

*Member At-Large
Term Expires July 2026*

JOE DEFOE

*Member At-Large
Term Expires July 2025*





ADMINISTRATION

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Tribal Government departments and programs underwent important organizational changes this year to align with the needs of our community and allow for the continued growth of the Tribe's service offerings.

The **Education Division** and the **Education Division Administrator** were reinstated. The division now encompasses the Early Childhood Center (Head Start, Early Head Start and 4K), the Zhawenimikaang Childcare Center, the Education Department & Library, the Ojibwemowin Teacher Training Program, and the Zaagichigaazowin Home Visiting Program. This consolidation focused on collaboration among education-related entities and places best practices and community needs at the center of decision making and resources.

The **Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO)** transitioned from Administration into the Treaty Natural Resources Division. This integration is expected to streamline processes related to cultural resource management and environmental protection, ensuring the preservation of Anishinaabe cultural values and traditions while promoting sustainable resource use.

A new **Protective Services Division Administrator** position was created to lead the law enforcement, fire and community safety needs. This addition allows the Chief of Police to dedicate more time and attention to critical law enforcement and initiatives such as community policing, and the ongoing drug-related crime and collaborative efforts.

Additionally, the **Law Enforcement Commission** was reinstated for ensuring accountability and maintaining the highest levels of professionalism within the Red Cliff Police Department. The **Fire Department** also underwent restructuring and transitioned to a new leadership team focused on improving skills and training, response times, enhancing operational efficiency, proper maintenance of equipment, and better serving the community's fire and emergency needs.

The **Transportation and Roads Departments** transferred from the Planning Department to the Public Works Division. This change is in response to the community's need for improved resource utilization and service delivery. It also improves coordination on infrastructure projects which is leading to more efficient planning and execution.





ADMINISTRATION

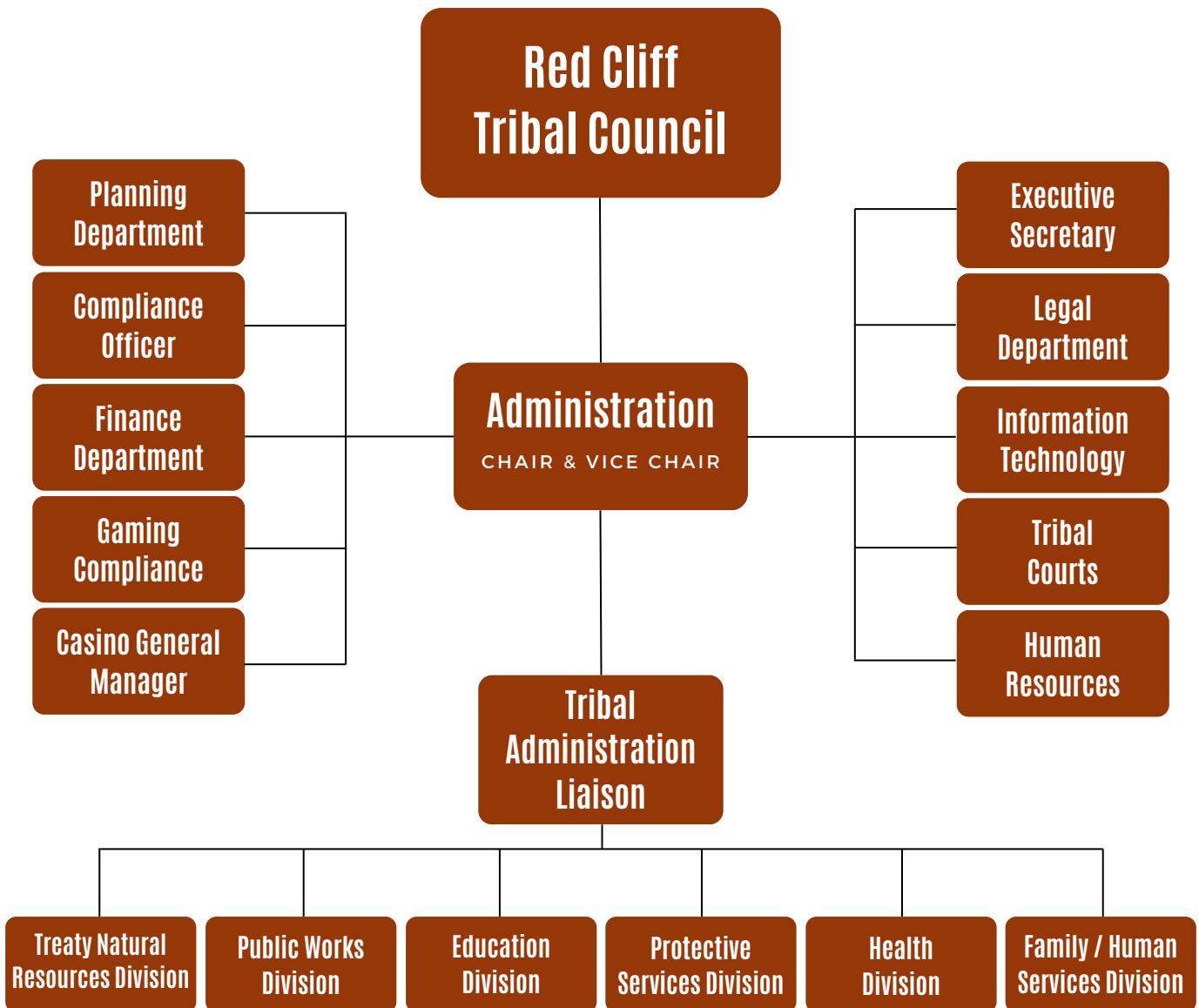
ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

600+

Number of employees across Tribal Government departments, programs, and enterprises, including the Health Center, Legendary Waters, Buffalo Bay Store, Fish Company, and Housing Authority. This also includes Tribal Government Committee members. Howa! The Tribe continues to be one of the largest employers in Bayfield County.

400+

Number of employees who are Tribal Members from Red Cliff and other Tribes.





EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

TRIBAL COUNCIL LOBBIES FOR THE PROPOSED TRIBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARITY ACT

Tribal Council Members met with members of the 118th Congress as part of the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes Impact Week in Washington DC in March 2024 to discuss the Parity for Tribal Law Enforcement Act. If passed and signed into law, the Parity for Tribal Law Enforcement Act would provide significant advancements in public safety for Tribal communities across the country and here in Gaa-Miskwaabikaang.

“While the House and Senate committees continue to review the proposed legislation, we strive to educate and answer any questions they have about the need, plans and impact this would have on our law enforcement services and community,” said Chairwoman Boyd. “It’s imperative that we make these visits to DC for members of Congress to hear directly from us.”

The Parity for Tribal Law Enforcement Act’s goal is to define tribal law enforcement officers as federal law enforcement officers with equitable pay and benefits. This would have a great impact on Tribes’ abilities to retain quality officers in their tribal police departments.

“Currently, most tribes aren’t able to offer significant retirement, pension, and death benefits to their qualified officers, and as a result those officers move on to different departments to access those benefits,” says Vice Chairman Peterson. “This bill would increase our ability to recruit and retain officers, and more importantly it would give tribal officers and their loved ones the benefits that they have earned.”

Chairwoman Boyd said retaining police officers is important not only for the Tribes’ operations, but for community members as well.

“The longer we’re able to keep officers in our police department, the more opportunities they have to connect and truly be a part of our community,” said Boyd. “Instead of seeing new officers coming and going, our members can form relationships and begin to trust the officers they see and interact with on a daily basis.”

The proposed bill received a hearing at the House’s Natural Resource Committee in October 2024 and has significant bipartisan support by both the House and Senate. If action is not taken during the 118th Congress, we anticipate it will be reintroduced in the 119th and we will continue our advocacy.





EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

STATEMENT ON APOSTLE ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK BILL

Tribal Administration released this statement in August 2024 after Wisconsin Congressman Tom Tiffany introduced a bill that would redesignate Wenabozho Ominisan - currently known as the Apostle Island National Lakeshore - as a national park.

There is ongoing debate throughout our region as to what the potential benefits and drawbacks would be if this bill is passed. The bill claims the redesignation to “Apostle Islands National Park” and “Sand Island National Preserve” would increase tourism, protect landscapes, and maintain hunting access. The bill also claims the redesignation would create the first national park in Wisconsin. However, Frog Bay Tribal National Park here in Gaa-Miskwaabikaang (Red Cliff) was created in 2012, making it the first of its kind in Wisconsin and across the United States.

Gaa-Miskwaabikaang Tribal officials have repeatedly presented questions and concerns about the bill to lawmakers and Tiffany’s staff at the Capitol. However, the Tribe has not received sufficient communication or information. Without the appropriate consultation from lawmakers, the Tribe must oppose this bill in order to protect the best interests of Gaa-Miskwaabikaang and its tribal membership.

To the Tribe’s knowledge, there has been no environmental impact study; no economic impact study; no infrastructure impact study; no cultural and treaty rights impact study; and no mention of what specific federal fiscal resources this change would bring to the area.

The Tribe is open to working with lawmakers on issues that ultimately impact Gaa-Miskwaabikaang, its tribal membership, and our natural resources. However, the Tribe cannot justify this bill to our community. The Tribe must know the potential impacts to our members’ treaty rights.

What Is The Tribe Doing?

Tribal staff and partners have spent many hours trying to get definitive answers on how a redesignation would affect our local community and our treaty rights. This includes conversations with Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, National Park Service, National Parks Conservation Association, regional and state elected officials, surrounding municipalities, and pertinent community members. Tribal officials have been informed that Representative Tiffany has made several appearances in the area to meet with various hunting and sporting groups. To date, he has not met directly with Red Cliff officials on the redesignation proposal.

For generations, Red Cliff leaders have been actively engaged in protecting our lands and way of life. Tourism and economic prosperity are necessary components of a thriving community, however, our first obligation is to retain our inherent rights as the indigenous people and caretakers of our homelands to ensure all that our ancestors sacrificed for will be here for future generations. This is what we are doing and will continue to do.





SUCCESS STORY: TRIBAL CENSUS

Tribal Administration and staff completed an on-reservation Tribal Census at the beginning of 2023 to compile accurate information about Red Cliff tribal members. This data collected from community member households is extremely important for the Tribe's efforts to enhance and attract funding for our community programs.

The information collected from the census will enable the Tribe to understand and communicate the level of need for services including housing, healthcare, social services, and cultural programming, and determine the courses of action that will best meet the needs of community members.

Many of the updates and highlights included in this Annual Report are a direct result of Census responses.

Initiatives like the Elder Home Improvement Program and Teacher-Training Program receive funding based on community desire for those types of resources.

The next page shows key findings from the census, with information about housing needs, employment, education, language, and culture.

What do you value most about living on the Red Cliff Reservation?
“Having the opportunity to learn more about our culture and language”

427

Number of completed surveys in Gaa-Miskwaabikaang

90%

Response rate from households in Gaa-Miskwaabikaang

Our survey field staff (right) worked incredibly hard and did a wonderful job of working with community members to get an accurate reflection of the Tribal community.



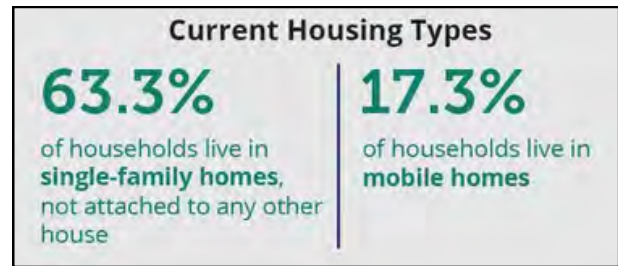


BY THE NUMBERS: TRIBAL CENSUS

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Overcrowding. Census results show there is a need for 219 additional housing units.

The Giiwedin Housing development and two new Elder complexes will greatly reduce the housing shortage.



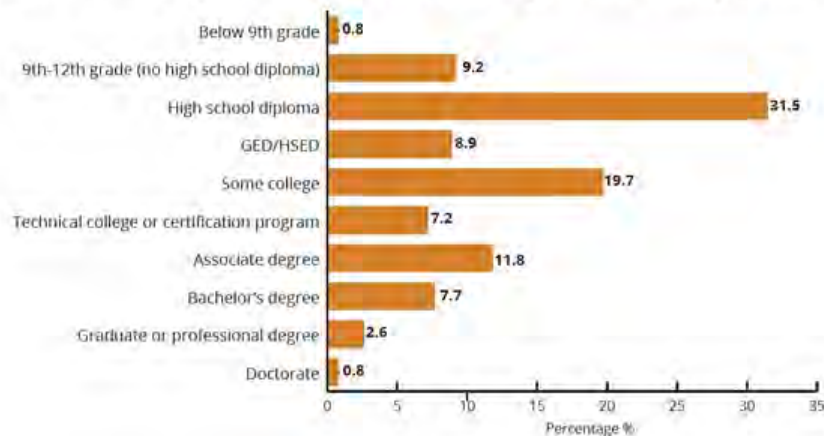
Employment. 15.5% of households have at least one person looking for work. Some of the biggest barriers to employment were identified as job availability on or near the reservation, family responsibilities, and a lack of childcare.

The upcoming completion of the Fiber to Home Project will greatly increase work from home opportunities, allowing more members to remain in Red Cliff. The Zhawenimikaang Child Care Center continues to seek staff and offer resources for Child Care Provider training and certification.

Education. 90% of adults said they have a high school diploma or higher, and 40% of households have at least one adult interested or uncertain about continuing education. 50.5% listed high costs as one of their biggest barriers.

Language and Culture revitalization is a high priority for community members. There is a high level of support for the new Immersion Classrooms and more than half of households want to develop their ojibwemowin skills.

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

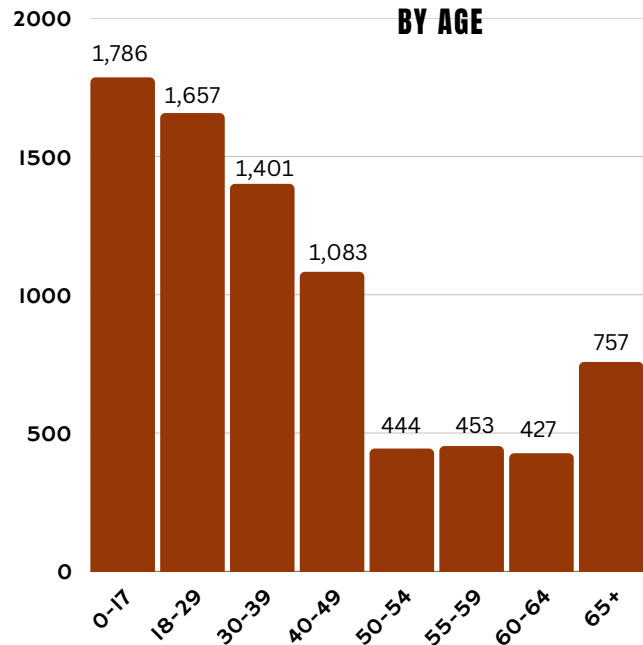
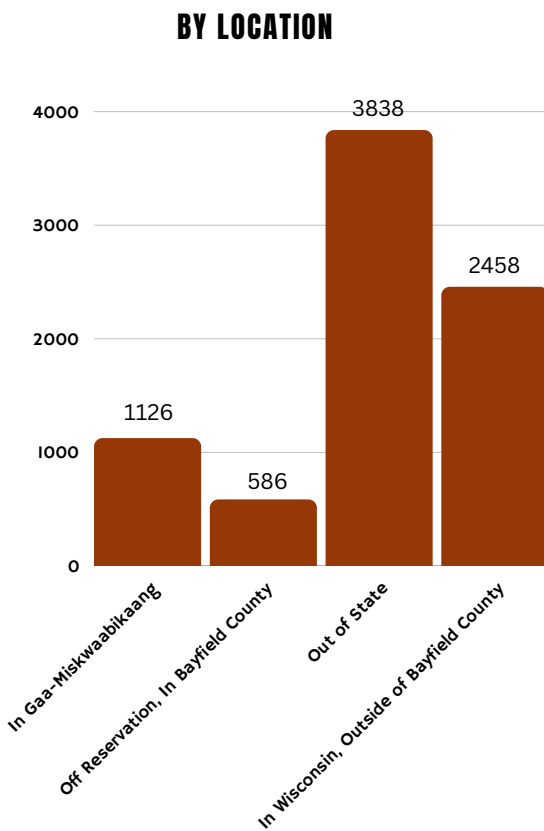




TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP

The Tribe's total membership has increased to 8,008. In 2024, 162 new members enrolled, including 57 through automatic membership and 105 through the July 2024 adoption referendum. Approximately 14% of the membership lives in Gaa-Miskwaabikaang. Just over 7% live in Bayfield County outside of the reservation boundaries. 30% of the membership lives in Wisconsin outside of Bayfield County, and nearly 48% of members live outside of Wisconsin.

According to our records as of the end of 2024, Carmilla Bernstein is the oldest living Red Cliff Tribal Member at age 97. She is set to turn 98 in September 2025. Howa!



1934 PROJECT

This past April marked the 90th anniversary of a census of Red Cliff members. With the Indian Reorganization Act of that year and the 1935-1936 Constitution, the 1934 census became one of the two base rolls for Red Cliff membership. Staff have been collecting personal recollections, oral histories, and photographs of Red Cliff members living in 1934-1935 so they can be preserved and presented for the 100th anniversary.

You can submit photos and/or information about your ancestors from 1934-35 at the Tribal Administration Building, or online at <https://redcliff.rja.revize.com/forms/7181>





HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Red Cliff Health Division and Community Health Center serve Gaa-Miskwaabikaang and the surrounding areas, offering a variety of medical, dental, pharmaceutical, behavioral health, and community health services.

The **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)** department operates within the Health Services Division. This allows EMS to have an integrated approach to emergency response, engage highly qualified responders and improve aftercare coordination with service providers.

Red Cliff EMS currently partners with LCO University as a training facility for EMT and EMR classes and looks forward to expanding this within their new facility.



The new Red Cliff Emergency Medical Services building has been completed! The facility is located at 37100 Hwy 13 and houses on-call EMS personnel and equipment.

HEALTH CONDITIONS: WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN RED CLIFF

Red Cliff's Health Services continues to report the most prevalent chronic conditions within the community are **diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and cancer**. They also report seeing **obesity rates** of 26% for patients aged 0-18 and 52% for patients over the age of 19.

HOW WE'RE ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES

A priority goal is to support patients with engaging in their healthcare and helping them to receive preventive services. The Health Center is currently transitioning to a new electronic health record that will allow patients to see reminders for preventive services that are due. Patients will also have access to their health records and will be able to engage with their providers.

The Health Center recently hired two Care Management/Community Health Nurses. The goal is to provide patients education while in the exam room. If indicated, the nurses can follow patient's care into the community setting by providing home visits, medication management, and referrals to other Tribal programming.

COMMUNITY WELLNESS FACILITY

A large Tribal initiative is the design and construction of a new Wellness Center. This facility will provide a space for members to improve their overall health by engaging in physical activity, wellness classes, and rehabilitation services. The wellness center will be located south of Birch Bark Trail, which will support indoor and outdoor activities along with opportunities for connection to nature.

Conceptual image





HEALTH & WELLNESS

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN RED CLIFF

According to the last two Tribal Censuses, community members believe mental health and substance abuse / AODA programming should be one of the Tribe's top priorities.

In addition to the variety of in-house direct services offered by the Red Cliff Community Health Center, we utilize contractual tele-psychiatry to meet higher-level needs. However, there is a current wait list of **sixty-eight (68)** for psychiatry and medication management services.

The need is being addressed by increasing the contracted hours available and assessing the potential of hiring a position on staff. Continued growth of peer support, aftercare, counseling, treatment and services to high-need and incarcerated members is another priority area. The department facilitates training for peer specialists and recovery coaches to increase the number of positions available to serve the community.

HOW THE WRAPAROUND CARE MODEL BETTER SERVES OUR COMMUNITY

Red Cliff's system of care is designed to make it easier for community members to access the care and resources available to them from the Tribe's various divisions and departments.

Relatives work with a dedicated team of service providers to develop a service plan to **meet the individual's unique needs and goals.**

This "no wrong door" approach provides a built-in referral process, which gives community members access to all services regardless of which program they have developed a trusting relationship with.

This care system provides seamless access to necessary services that are client directed and recovery oriented. These areas are prioritized:

Substance Use. Red Cliff remains in a State of Emergency related to substance abuse, particularly the opioid crisis.

Workforce Development. Part of the Wraparound Care process is helping each client develop the tools and skills necessary for them to gain meaningful employment.

Language & Culture. Any movement toward recovery and wellness is integrated with Anishinaabe language, culture, and values.





EDUCATION

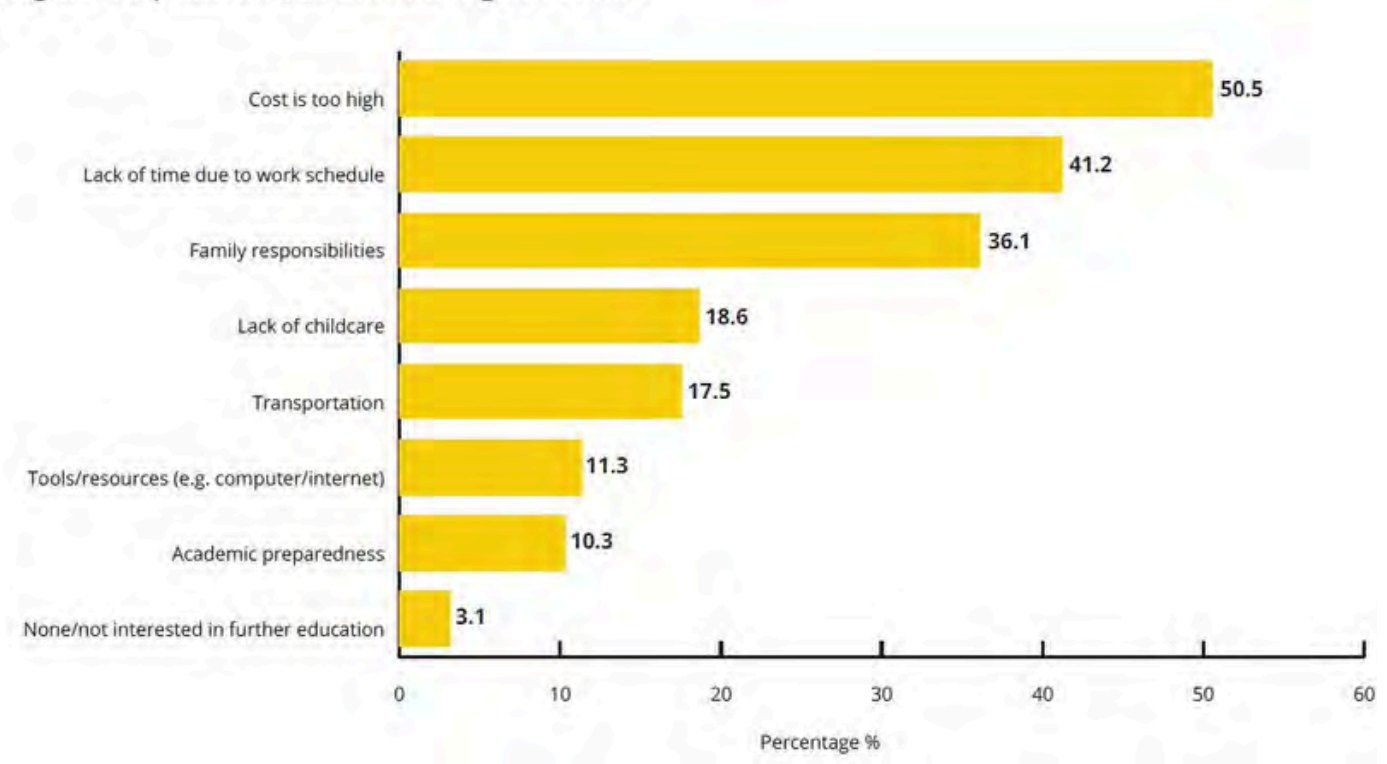
477 PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

Administration and staff continue to develop the model to merge programs under the Public Law 102-477 Program. This model increases community members' access to a wide range of education and job training services based on their unique needs.

The purpose is to integrate, coordinate, and strengthen key employment, education, training, cash assistance, child care, and related services. Through the Red Cliff 477 Program, the employment, education, training, and related needs will be comprehensively assessed; those deemed to require the support of the 477 Program will then participate in the design of a personally customized suite of wrap-around services that will empower them to overcome any and all obstacles that stand in the way of their successful advancement and achievement of their employment, education, and training pursuits and goals.

From the Tribal Census

Figure 19 | Barriers to Continuing Education





EDUCATION

Member Highlights: Transforming lives and shaping futures

2024 was a great year for our members and higher-education achievements!

At least 15 members completed collegiate degrees and graduated this past year. Many of these graduates received assistance from the Tribe's scholarship program. Congratulations to these members:

Medical School

Grace Armstrong, UW-Madison Medical School graduate. Currently part of UW-Madison Internal Medicine Residency Program.

Masters Degrees

Caitlyn Bolen, UW-Superior; Counseling Clinical Mental Health
Rebecca Benton, Business Management; Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University
Gretchen Morris, UM-Duluth; Advanced Generalist Social Work

Bachelors Degrees

Sawyer Armstrong, UW-Madison; Accounting
Shana Aubid, Fond Du Lac Tribal & Community College; Elementary Education
Dylan Barningham, Rasmussen University; Nursing
Andrea Bonney, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University; Human Services
Stephanie Fones, UW-Milwaukee; Geoscience
Olivia Garramone, UM-Duluth; Psychology
Tiffany Hanson, UW-Whitewater; Early Childhood Education & Special Education
Kaylee Madison, UW-Stout; Digital Marketing Technology
Lexie Turner, Northern Michigan University; Psychology

Associates Degrees

Jeannie Buckholtz, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University; Small Business
Misty Nordin, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University; Liberal Arts
Renee Topping, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University; Liberal Arts
Heather Tennes, Morain Park Technical College; Accounting
Amelia Spinner, Northwood Tech College; Welding Certificate

"Earning my degree has enabled me to better serve the Tribe and my community, but I hope it also inspires others to go after their goals and dreams."

-Rebecca Benton

"Keep going, keep studying, and keep working hard because you can do it. I faced many doubts throughout my schooling, feeling like I did not belong in this space, but now I am one more day closer to achieving my dream."

-Grace Armstrong





EDUCATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

With over 30 employees, the Red Cliff Early Childhood Center provided services to 79 families for 97 children and 9 prenatal women through Head Start, Early Head Start and Community-Based 4K programming. The ECC returned the Ojibwemowin Immersion program to the infant classroom in 2024 through the support of the Teacher Training Program. It also continues to build outdoor education classroom spaces. In addition to regular family and community engagement, the ECC welcomes volunteers from the Park Service and UW-Extension, and enjoys many partnerships with the Health Center, Bayfield School, Food Distribution, and other Tribal programs.

CHILD CARE IN RED CLIFF

The **Zhawenimikaang Child Care Center** has taken steps forward, but continues to operate on a limited basis. The bottom line is that we need more licensed child care teachers and providers.

The Child Care Center is now operating with three teachers and has been able to establish more consistency with attendance, allowing for a full classroom of students and limiting full day closures.

The Child Care Center is available to children aged 6 months to 5 years. The Center served 11 children within 10 families over this past year.

The Tribe has formed a **Child Care Task Force**, which has been working to attract care providers. The Task Force is also providing information and training courses to community members who are interested in becoming certified providers. Currently there are no members providing certified in-home child care.



ZAAGICHIGAAZOWIN HOME VISITING PROGRAM

The Zaagichigaazowin Home Visiting Program provides home visits and incorporates an evidence-based curriculum for prenatal and post-partum families. The program weaves traditional Ojibwe cultural practices and learning into its curriculum, and it offers group connections, community events, doula services, and more. It is a voluntary program and there is no cost to participate.

The ZHV program offers services to tribal and non-tribal families, and it has flourished this past year as an important piece of the Tribe's education and wraparound family services.





LANGUAGE & CULTURE

2024 was a big year for our Anishinaabe language and culture initiatives. In addition to the Ojibwemowin Immersion Program and the Teaching & Training Program, the Tribe consistently hosts cultural gatherings, camps, and opportunities for our members to exercise their Treaty Rights.

OJIBWEMOWIN IMMERSION PROGRAM BEGINS

The Tribe’s language and culture revitalization efforts took a big leap forward this year with the forming of an Ojibwemowin Immersion Program at the Bayfield School District and the Red Cliff Early Childhood Center.

“Launching the Ojibwemowin Immersion Program is a milestone in history and the next step in truly revitalizing our language, healing some of the trauma, and growing a healthy and thriving community.”
-Red Cliff Chairwoman Nicole Boyd



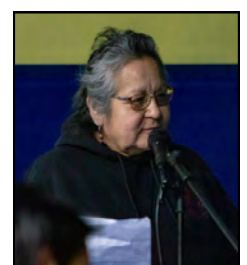
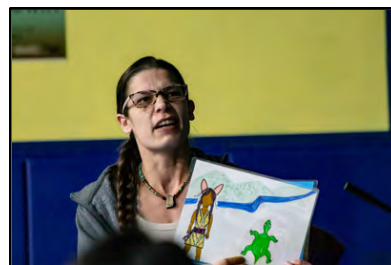
Youth enjoy cultural activities at Anishinaabemowin Gabeshiwin.

The Kindergarten Immersion Program began this past fall at the Bayfield School, a decision based on research and strong community support. According to Bayfield School District Administrator Dr. Beth Manidoo Makwa Paap, our youngest students are the best candidates for learning languages, and the immersion program fosters their appreciation of Indigenous culture and values. The plan is to add a grade level each successive school year as the students age. By 2029-30, the school is expected to have Ojibwemowin Immersion for grades K-5.

OJIBWEMOWIN TEACHING & TRAINING PROGRAM

We continue to be impressed by the Ojibwemowin Teaching & Training Program cohorts of full-time adult language trainees. The program is building proficient Ojibwe speakers and highly skilled adult learners engaged in teacher training.

As immersion programming grows at the pre-k and grade levels, the Teaching & Training Program is crucial to growing qualified teachers to work with our students.



Aadizookaan (storytelling) performed by our language trainees was a crowd favorite at Biboon Gabeshiwin (winter camp).





LANGUAGE & CULTURE

TREATY DAY COMMEMORATION ON MOONINGWANEAANING

Tribal leaders, elders, youth and hundreds of community members from across Anishinaabe country gathered on Mooningwanekaaning Madeline Island (home of the yellow breasted wood pecker) in September to commemorate the 1854 Treaty between the Lake Superior Chippewa (Ojibwe, Anishinaabe) and the United States.

It is important to remember our ancestors' efforts and sacrifices in affirming and protecting our treaty rights as Anishinaabeg. The commemoration featured a buffalo pipe tobacco ceremony, food offering, lacrosse game, and many wonderful words spoken by knowledge keepers.



CULTURAL CENTER

Construction of the new Cultural Center Roundhouse on the back side of the pow wow grounds off Hwy 13 N and Nuzzo Road is almost finished! The Facility was identified as a priority need and past Council invested ARPA funding to construct. The Cultural Center is expected to provide more opportunities for our growing efforts of supporting indigenous culture, knowledge, language, wellness, ceremonies and gatherings.





LANGUAGE & CULTURE

EXERCISING TREATY RIGHTS: FAMILY SPEARING NIGHT

Gaa-Miskwaabikaang and Mashkiiziibii families participated in a group spearing trip in April at Lake Namekagon. Chi-Miigwech to our Tribal programs, community partners, and volunteers!



ISKIGAMIZIGANING IZHAADAA - LET'S GO TO THE SUGARBUSH

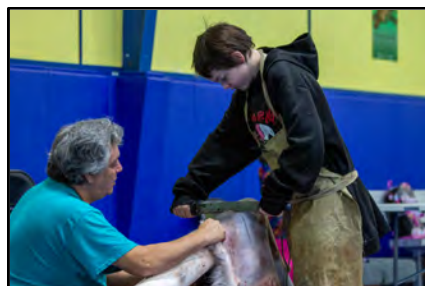
The Red Cliff Farm and Tribal Historic Preservation Office collaborate on many projects throughout the year, including iskgamizigan (sugarbush)! This year's Sugarbush Family Day welcomed hundreds of community members and students for hands-on sugarbush activities. Supplies are also loaned out to community members to harvest their own sap.



CULTURAL CAMPS

Despite the lack of significant snow, our staff and volunteers hosted a wonderful Biboon Gabeshiwin (winter camp), followed by Anishinaabemowin Gabeshiwin (language camp).

Biboon Gabeshiwin is also a wonderful collaborative effort between the Tribe and the Bayfield School District. Students are bussed in during the school day and are able to incorporate cultural skills and knowledge into their regular curriculum.





LANGUAGE & CULTURE

46TH ANNUAL RED CLIFF POW WOW

The Tribe's Annual Pow Wow in 2024 was our biggest yet! We welcomed over 2,200 attendees throughout the three days, as Anishinaabeg and visitors from across the country participated in dance specials and cultural demonstrations. The Pow Wow featured 13 drums, nearly 500 registered dancers, and over 20 food and craft vendors circled the Cultural Grounds. Howa!

The Pow Wow also provided work opportunities to over 30 community members.

2024-2025 Royalty

Gaa-Miskwaabikaang Royalty are expected to represent themselves and our community as positive role models. They attend and participate in community events, provide service to elders, and represent Gaa-Miskwaabikaang at other Tribes' cultural events.

Congratulations to our royalty and chi-miigwech for representing Gaa-Miskwaabikaang!

Sr. Miss: Elvira Albert

Jr. Miss: Adriauna Curran

Lil Miss: Elsa Bressette

Tiny Tot: Everly Defoe

Warrior: Ozaawaa Morris-Helms

Jr Warrior: Kenyon Gordon

Lil Warrior: Micah Topping

Tiny Tot: Esias Defoe

The **Junior Tribal Council** has been active and focusing on language and culture, water quality, training opportunities, and providing valuable youth feedback on Tribal projects. Great job to our Junior Tribal Council members: Kylie Bildeau, Elliot Newago, Adriauna Curran, Ozaawaa Morris-Helms, Conner Duffy, Nicholas DePerry Jr., Ogimaa Montano, Robert Poch III, and Leila Butterfield.





FAMILY & HUMAN SERVICES

HEALTH FOOD DISTRIBUTION

The goal of providing locally sourced, healthy and culturally appropriate foods to the community continued in 2024! In addition to the Food Distribution program, the Tribe held a series of **Tribal Elder Food Box** and **Local Food Box** giveaways.

Over **4,500 Tribal Elder Food Boxes** were distributed at 15 events, providing our elders with quality proteins, produce, and shelf-stable items sourced from Indigenous and local producers. Food Distribution staff also hosted elder and youth monthly cooking classes using ingredients from the elder boxes.

The Local Food Box program allowed the Tribe to purchase food from local producers and distribute thousands of boxes to tribal members throughout the year.

Foods like manoomin (wild rice), fish from Gitchi Gami, wild berry jams, local fruits and berries, and vegetables came from the likes of Siskowit Galloways Farm, Red Lake Farm, Hermit Creek Farm, and Red Cliff Fish Company.



Farm Manager Allissa Stutte and Food Distribution Director Butch Bresette prepare for a Local Food Box Giveaway.



Bayfield School students visited to assist with an Elder Food Box Giveaway!

Students learned about how food plays an important role in caring for our community members. These visits also serve as a wonderful way for our elders and youth to connect and interact with each other.





FAMILY & HUMAN SERVICES

BUILDING FUTURES FOR GAA-MISKWAABIKAANG

Under the FHS Division, the **Boys & Girls Club of Gitchigami** serves youth aged 8-18. The Club provides a safe space for youth, and staff provide the tools to build self-confidence and foster a sense of cultural identity. When fully staffed, you will find the youth tucked in every space inside and near the building participating in sports, cooking, crafting, or on fantastic field trips! Low attendance for any Club hosted event can typically be attributed to lower staff numbers and the inability to provide transportation....a goal we are always working to improve!

The Summer Day Program provided a great outlet for our youth and their families during their break from school for the second year in a row.

The 2nd Annual “Smoke Fish, Not Drugs” Youth Pow Wow was hosted by the Club this past year and has turned into a can’t-miss event for youth from Red Cliff and other tribes.

The annual youth **Wolf Camp** was successfully held at Raspberry Campgrounds and provided culturally significant experiences for our youth to engage with knowledge keepers and learn traditional Anishinaabe practices, games and Ojibwemowin.



BRIGHTER FUTURES INITIATIVE

The Brighter Futures Initiative Program works to directly prevent and reduce alcohol and drug use amongst youth. The BFI focuses on building interpersonal and self-sufficiency skills, and preventing violence and delinquent behaviors. The BFI program works closely with the Boys & Girls Club and the School District of Bayfield to increase access and participation. BFI funding sponsors many youth activities throughout the year including partnerships with the Bayfield School and events like the Airborne Marcus Robinson Basketball Camp. BFI continues to be a very competitive state grant, and we are tracking data to show that these events and work are having the impacts described.





FAMILY & HUMAN SERVICES

ELDERLY PROGRAMMING GETS A BOOST

The **Elder Long-Term Care Home Improvement Program**, a \$2-million dollar grant from the WI Department of Health Services, was received to provide repairs and improve eligible elders' homes. This program is crucial for allowing our elderly to remain in their homes and age in a safe place. Improvements to over 40 elderly homes will be completed and several local tribal members were employed as part of this project.

The Elderly Program continues to expand services for our community elders based on their needs and feedback. Daily meals are offered for in-person congregate dining, pickup, or home-delivery. Elders enjoy group trips for shopping, entertainment, bingo and blitz games. Holiday gatherings continue to be a huge attraction and highly attended.

GLNAEA CONFERENCE TRIPS

The Great Lakes Native American Elder Association meets regularly throughout the year, providing support and care information for elders and Tribal programs.

Red Cliff's Elder Program provides hotel rooms and transportation for Red Cliff elders to travel and attend these important gatherings.

Red Cliff Elder delegation at December's GLNAEA gathering at Forest County Potawatomi.



AGING & DISABILITY SPECIALIST

Gaa-Miskwaabikaang elders now have access to a full time Aging and Disability Resource Specialist employed by the Tribe. This service provides our elders and people with physical or intellectual disabilities the resources needed to live with dignity and security while achieving maximum independence and quality of life.

Red Cliff's ADRS works to empower individuals to make informed choices and to streamline access to the right and appropriate services and supports.

LET'S EXPLORE! ELDER GROUP TRIPS



One of our elder trips was a fun outing to Duluth! The group enjoyed a train ride and visited the Lake Superior Railroad Museum.



Remembering Leo LaFernier Sr

An interview with Dusty LaFernier



Dusty LaFernier is proud to be the grandson of Leo LaFernier Bezhige Gaa Bo. Leo passed away at the age of 80 in 2014, two years after his wife (Dusty's Grandma) Shirley, when Dusty was in 7th grade. Dusty remembers his grandpa's funeral being held at The Hall (Boy's & Girl's Club), where Dusty previously worked as the Club Director.

Dusty recalls his grandpa as a soft-spoken man who could quiet a room when he spoke. Dusty says, "When he spoke, the room was quiet. That was how much respect he had. When he spoke, no one made a peep."

"My Grandpa and Grandma had an open-door policy. We all still live that way. My grandpa treated everyone like family. You wouldn't leave his place hungry or thirsty. If you knew Leo and needed help, he'd take care of you." Leo was lovingly known throughout the community as Uncle Leo.

Leo attended school at St. Francis in Red Cliff. He served in the US Air Force, sailed on the ore boats, worked for the oil industry, and took night courses at Milwaukee Technical School for business management.

From 1959 to 1973, he worked for Chicago Landscaping. While living in Chicago, he started the Chicago Indian Village, which helped Native American Families in need.

In 1973, Leo relocated his family to Red Cliff, where he cut pulp and was an extra hand on fishing boats. Leo ran for Tribal Council in 1980. He served as Vice Chairman in Red Cliff from 1983 to 1998, and remained on the General Council until 1999. Leo served on various Tribal committees, task forces, and State committees.

Dusty remembers that his Grandpa Leo was a pipe carrier, firekeeper, flag carrier, and traditional dancer. For many years, he opened the Sandy Lake ceremony with pipe and prayer. He was passionate about Treaty rights and was involved in the Walleye Wars.

Leo built his family home in Frog Bay. Dusty remembers his grandpa being called the Mayor of Frog Bay. Dusty says his grandpa was extremely proud of Frog Bay becoming a National Park. From 1985 to 2014, Leo helped found and served on the Voight Commission/GLIFWC. He was a leader in efforts to protect ceded territory natural resources and ecosystems, including efforts to assess the potential impacts of radioactive waste storage in ceded territory.

In 1989, he traveled to Germany as an Ambassador with many other tribal members to teach the Native American Culture. Dusty remembers hearing stories of the Powwow held in Germany during this cultural exchange.

Leo was instrumental in creating the Red Cliff Tribal Native American Lands Environmental Mitigation Committee (NALEMP), which began in 2005. He had been the Chairman since 2010 and had served as a standing member since its inception. The committee's creation is credited to Leo being one of the few individuals who, since the mid-1990s, carried out research and stood as a strong advocate for what is known as the Lake Superior Barrels Project. The project involved researching and conducting investigations on approximately 1,437, 55-gallon barrels dumped into Lake Superior by the US Army between 1959 and 1962.



In 2008, Dusty's Grandpa Leo received a proclamation from the Red Cliff Band to recognize May 10th as 'Leo LaFernier Sr. Day.'





HOUSING

As shown in the Tribal Census results, over 200 housing units are needed to address the severe overcrowding here in Gaa-Miskwaabikaang. In reality, there is need for even more housing to provide a legitimate opportunity for members to return home and live in Red Cliff.

The Tribe is consistently seeking and being awarded funding to increase housing. In addition to the Giiwedín Housing Development and the two new Elder apartment buildings, the Tribe has most recently been awarded a \$5 million grant that will establish an assistance program for tribal members who own manufactured homes in Red Cliff. The program will make funding available for needed repairs, significant rehabilitation, or full replacement of mobile homes.



GIIWEDIN (NORTH WIND) COMMUNITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The Giiwedín Community Housing Development consists of two development phases at the former Shodeen Property on Blueberry Road. **Phase One** includes the construction of two new apartment buildings. Each building will have eight units featuring one- and two-bedroom apartments expected to be complete in March 2026. **Phase Two** includes the development of 20 home lots along with new streets, utilities, and a sewer replacement along Blueberry Road.

Giiwedín Housing Site Plan



ELDERLY HOUSING

Two new 12-unit apartment buildings will be built specifically for our Elders. Howa!

The two Elder complexes are expected to be constructed on Aiken Road, west of the Tribal Farm. Aiken Road will also be paved as part of this project.





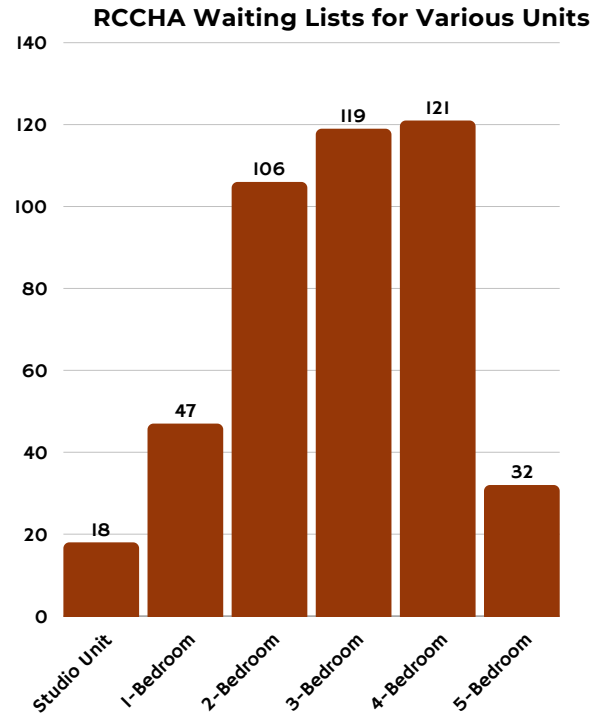
HOUSING

RED CLIFF CHIPPEWA HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Housing Authority manages 219 units throughout Gaa-Miskwaabikaang, serving over 600 tenants and families.

The Housing Authority experienced significant unit vacancy in 2023-2024 due to a high amount of evictions related to drug use, major damage, deaths and large amounts of staff turnover preventing typical turnover and re-occupancy. This resulted in excessive length of empty units and impacts on the overcrowding and homeless challenges. The Tribal Council has prioritized unit occupancy and readiness and is working directly with the Housing Board to resolve and prevent this again.

The Housing Authority has several lengthy waiting lists, further documenting the housing crisis in Red Cliff.



HOMEOWNERSHIP AND HOME IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

The Tribe and Housing Authority provide assistance and education for community members both on and off the reservation looking to buy a home and/or make significant home improvements. The Home Buyer Programs matched members with eligible mortgage programs / lenders and walked them through the application process. Through this program, six members were pre-approved for a mortgage in 2024. The Down Payment Assistance Program helped three members in 2024, with each receiving \$7,500 toward their home purchase down payment.

The Housing Authority managed approximately \$750,000 from the ARPA Homeowner Assistance Fund and \$246,000 from the BIA ARPA Home Improvement Program to help eligible members make repairs to their homes including energy efficiency, appliances, plumbing, electrical, roofs, windows, doors, decks and ramps and other areas identified to have a safe home.

LEASE SITE CLEANUP

The Lease Site Cleanup Project is steadily moving through over 30 lease sites. These sites are being cleared of debris and hazardous waste, which will open the lease sites up for the development of more housing. The Tribe has also lifted the moratorium on the lease sites, which means they are available again for members to move forward with housing construction. A total of approximately 33 sites will be assessed and cleaned up through 2027.

The Tribe has implemented tighter enforcement on lease compliance to address excessive “lease holding” where some members are holding lease sites but are not developing any housing. Enforcing Tribal lease laws will open more sites up for members who are ready to build homes, and will allow the Tribe to clean up more sites that are causing environmental concerns.





PROTECTIVE SERVICES

NEW FIRE TRUCK

The Tribe invested over \$600K in a new fire truck, which is expected to greatly increase our ability to extinguish emergency fires in Red Cliff and increase the support our fire department is able to lend to surrounding communities.



RED CLIFF POLICE DEPARTMENT

Officer turnover is a recurring issue. Recruiting and retaining Tribal police officers is a key priority for Tribal Administration. The officers we have do an incredible job protecting our community, and they have sacrificed great amounts of time with their families. We have made significant equipment upgrades, and now we must be able to provide them more resources before they look for employment elsewhere.

Despite staffing struggles, our Police Department maintains a strong and healthy working partnership with the County.

The Red Cliff Police Department continues to address the drug crisis in our community and across the entire region. RCPD is collaborating with state and federal units on a federal drug trafficking investigation, targeting the trafficking of narcotics to and within Indian Country.

POLICE STATION

\$1.4M from the U.S. Department of Justice - Bureau of Justice Assistance is being used to construct a new police station. The police station is expected to be built next to the new EMS Facility. This new station will strengthen the capacity of RCPD to address the drug trafficking crisis.

The new police station is expected to be completed by 2027.





TREATY NATURAL RESOURCES

BRESETTE INDUCTED TO CONSERVATION HALL OF FAME

Gaa-Miskwaabikaang's Walt Bresette (1947-1999) was inducted to the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame this past year! The Tribe hosted a watch party and gathering in April to honor his induction.

Rick Whaley, who co-authored the award-winning book *Walleye Warriors: The Chippewa Treaty Rights Story* along with Walt, made the trip to join our event here in Gaa-Miskwaabikaang. Rick shared the story of how he met Walt and highlighted the importance of their work.

GLIFWC Executive Administrator Jason Schlender also spoke about the importance of Walt's legacy, treaty rights, and how we must remain vigilant in our education and outreach of our people, language, and culture. He discussed how Red Cliff's current language immersion efforts are directly tied to Walt's vision.

Walt's daughter, Katy Bresette, shared memories and stories of her childhood and the impact of Walt's legacy.

About Walt: Walter Bresette was born on July 4, 1947 in Red Cliff. Catholic school in Red Cliff was followed by high school in Bayfield. In 1965, he attended a summer camp for Indigenous youth at UW-Eau Claire. Walt served four years in the U.S. Army (stationed in Japan) as a communications specialist. After service, Walt expanded into other avenues in communications—art school (Chicago); Indian issues advocacy (Madison, Wisconsin); WOJB Radio (Lac Courte Oreilles); Great Lakes Indian Fish Commission (Odanah, Wisconsin) and first editor of their conservation newsletter, *Masina'igan*, and then he shapeshifted into public speaking and activism.

Those who fish in northern Wisconsin lakes or in the Wolf River owe Walt Bresette an untold debt for his role in the defeat of the Crandon Mine and the landmark Mining Moratorium Bill. Signed into law by Gov. Tommy Thompson on Earth Day, 1998, it required any metallic-sulfide mining company, before mining in Wisconsin, to prove they had not polluted surface water or groundwater in any of their previous mines in the U.S. or Canada.

When conservationists and environmentalists think of Walt Bresette's legacy, they remember him and the non-violent Ojichidaag (protectors of the people) protecting Bad River's sacred wild rice beds by blockading a train carrying sulfuric acid over rickety tracks to a mine in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, five miles from Lake Superior.



When Nature educators think of the storyteller and visionary Bresette, they hear children in Wisconsin public schools debating the merits of protecting land and soil, water and air, forests and fisheries—the public commons—with a proposed Seventh Generation Constitutional Amendment.

Always reaching out to neighbors in Wisconsin and the Upper Great Lakes region, Walter invited non-Indian communities to join Native people in protecting Wisconsin's and Great Lakes' precious resources.

"You can't defend your home with just legislation and litigation. You need a social movement... Because someday our children are going to rise up and say, 'Where were you when they poisoned our river!? Where were you when we can't eat the fish no more!?' And they will remember who sat idly by, as we poisoned their bodies and poisoned their minds. The Seventh Generation is a good philosophy. But we must not forget this generation. It is that close." – Walt Bresette

A video of Walt's 2024 Induction Ceremony to the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame can be watched online at wchf.org/walt-bresette





TREATY NATURAL RESOURCES

Red Cliff's Treaty Natural Resources Division oversees the preservation, protection, enhancement, and sustainable stewardship of our natural resources. TNR programs are essential to the Tribe's goals of maintaining balance between a healthy environment, economic goals, and future subsistence of all tribal members. Program staff work to ensure that our future generations continue to enjoy the benefits of those places that are of significant historical, cultural, and environmental importance.

THE FISH COMPANY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

The Red Cliff Fish Company continues to play a major role in the Tribe's food sovereignty efforts. Operating a Tribal-owned commercial fishing operation has enabled the Tribe to generate a revenue stream, and more importantly has directly contributed to providing food for our community. RCFC increased its wholesale distribution of fish to area customers and businesses, created new fish dips and products, contributed regularly to the Feeding Wisconsin Elder Boxes, and maintains its 10% over-the-counter discount to Tribal Member customers. The Fish Company is also in the process of expanding operations to include a Tribal trap net boat. The goal is for the Fish Company to own and operate a trap net boat to increase product inventory.



FISH HATCHERY STRENGTHENS LOCAL FISH POPULATIONS

The Tribe's Fish Hatchery produced a record-breaking 9,054 extended length walleye this past season along with approximately 16,000 brook trout. These walleye helped increase the population in the Pike Chain of lakes while the brook trout were released into Lake Superior, greatly assisting in bolstering local fish populations.

WAAWAASHKESHI FOR OUR ELDERS

Natural Resources staff conducted a hunt to benefit our elders this past fall. The Tribe coordinates with local hunters who donate their deer harvest! Our hunters donated 12 deer for this community initiative. Staff and volunteers, including school students, clean and prepare the deer for distribution to our elders. This is such a great example of the food sovereignty work we are doing.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & PROTECTION

The Environmental Department dedicates significant time to monitoring and external projects that directly impact the safety of our natural resources. This work includes both active and proposed mining projects, like the Back 40 Copperwood Tilden Mine. Much of this past year included active participation in the Line 5 Reroute in Bad River, continued fish sampling for PFAS and other potential chemicals, and more local work like reseeding manoomin at Raspberry, Frog Bay, Eagle Bay, and Big Sand Bay wetlands.

The Tribe took significant strides related to community member health and its crossover with environmental factors. Activities like home safety inspections, air quality testing, food inspections, and weather safety information became more accessible to community members this past year.





TREATY NATURAL RESOURCES

RED CLIFF FARM - MINO BIMAADIZIWIN GITIGAANIN

2024 was another great year for our Farm operations and its key work in the Tribe's food sovereignty efforts. Here are some wonderful highlights from this past year:

CSA Share Box Program: 540 regular shares and 90 Elder shares distributed, valued at over \$16,000

Free Farm Stand: Over \$5,000 worth of food products given out for free to community members

Food Purchased from Local Producers: \$32,000 worth purchased from Red Cliff producers; \$15,000 worth purchased from Indigenous producers from other Tribal Nations

Fish Waste Composted: 40,000 pounds of fish waste composted at the Farm, used to grow more plants and given away to community members

Food Sovereignty Grant Funding: \$1,018,250 received

Sugar Bush: 350 students attended sugar bush field trips

Helping Others Get Started: Over 3,000 plants given away at Plant & Seed event, along with 80 bags of compost; 50 fruit trees, and 10 garden beds

MA'IINGAN MANAGEMENT

The Treaty Natural Resources Department has implemented a comprehensive ma'iingan (wolf) monitoring project since 2010. This work is aimed at understanding and preserving the local ma'iingan families while mitigating conflicts with human activities. Red Cliff's project focuses on both conservation and protection. The Tribe prioritizes cultural significance mixed with scientific methodologies to ensure the persistence of this dear relative in an increasingly human-dominated landscape.

2024 was both an exciting year and a devastating year regarding ma'iinganag. At the beginning of the year we learned of the killing of Wolf 813, matriarch of the Echo Valley Pack. Wildlife staff had been monitoring W813 for over 10 years. Learn more about W813 and watch a short film titled *More Than A Wolf* featuring our Wildlife Staff online at www.wolvesofdouglascountywisconsin.com/films/

In more uplifting news, in June, Red Cliff Treaty Natural Resources Wildlife Staff were able to locate the Little Sioux Pack's den site and perform a pup health check. During the den checks, staff count the number of pups born that year, then they weigh, measure, microchip, and collar the puppies. The collar material is designed to expand and grow with the pups and eventually fall off.

Staff set up some trail cameras as "baby monitors." From the video footage, we can see the parents returning to move the pups to another den site within hours of the visit. These little ones are now helping our team track the growth and activity for their whole litter. Chi Miigwech to the Little Sioux Pack pups for giving us this amazing gift to benefit their whole family, and future relatives.

Ma'iingan Travels: Daughter of W813

Wildlife Staff have also been tracking the travels of a ma'iingan originally collared here in Gaa-Miskwaabikaang. The ma'iingan is the daughter of W813.

This ma'iingan has traveled hundreds of miles. She made her way through the Greater Voyageurs Ecosystem and traveled through several pack territories when doing so. She spent a handful of days hanging out in the Tilson Creek Pack territory by International Falls before heading to Manitoba.

Between February and August, the ma'iingan traveled a straight-line distance of 345 miles, but her travels were not straight. This is a great example showing how wolf populations in the Great Lake States and Ontario/Manitoba are effectively all part of a larger population in which individual wolves, generally young wolves, travel hundreds of miles looking for a territory of their own and a mate.





TREATY NATURAL RESOURCES

TRANSFER STATION - RISING COSTS CREATE A CHALLENGE

The Transfer Station is a vital service here in Gaa-Miskwaabikaang, both for our community members and for our natural resources. The Transfer Station accepts a wide range of waste materials at a low cost, and provides recycling services free of charge.

Rising operational costs, staff turnover, and increases in waste have posed significant challenges for the Transfer Station. Administration recognizes the Transfer Station as an important community service, and we're actively looking at all options to better serve our community members.

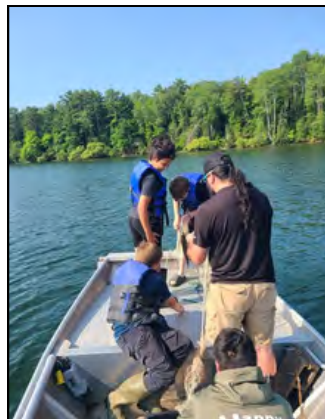
INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTORS

The Treaty Natural Resources intern program had three youth interns this past summer. Our youth interns worked diligently over the course of eight weeks.

During the initial phase of the program, interns were introduced to various departments, including the Fish Hatchery, Forestry and Wildlife, Fisheries, Environmental Department, Wardens, and Community Farm. They were also provided with necessary gear and completed a CPR/First Aid course to ensure their safety and preparedness in the workplace.

Each intern maintained a daily journal to document their experiences and activities throughout the program. The program also provided opportunities for hands-on learning and problem-solving, such as rescuing a painted turtle hatchling with a shell deformity and creating temporary habitats, as well as constructing "turtle crossing" road signs to protect the local turtle population.

To foster public speaking skills, all three interns presented a summary of their experiences to the tribal council at the end of the program. This opportunity helped them gain confidence and communication skills while sharing their achievements with the community.





PUBLIC WORKS

Red Cliff Public Works accomplished a lot this past year, including the Roads Department transitioning under their Division.

The Water & Sewer Department is operating sustainably without a subsidized budget from the tribal government. They successfully completed cleaning and repairs on the community water tower storage reservoir. Improvements were made at the Waste Treatment Facility, regular water quality testing continues, including testing of the spring at Raspberry Campgrounds, and a new water main was installed along Bradum Road.

The Facilities Maintenance Department is now managing over 60 Tribal buildings.

The Roads Department purchased state-of-the-art equipment to better manage road clearing operations and maintenance. Several Red Cliff roads were rebuilt and paved this year including North Bradum Road, Bineshii Drive, Daley Road, Acorn Road, Bradum Road, and Butterfield Farm Road. Chicago Creek Culvert is also scheduled to be replaced as part of the Tribe's Road Improvements Plan, along with a new non-motorized trails system.

Miskwaabikaang Transit has returned to pre-pandemic rider volumes. The Department will introduce new electric buses in the near future to their active inventory.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITY

Construction on the new transportation facility began this year as part of a \$5.8 million U.S. Department of Transportation BUILD grant program.

The facility will be located on Hwy 13 north of the Fish Hatchery and Brood Stock buildings and will house Miskwaabekong Transit and Roads staff, all buses and equipment, a maintenance garage, electric vehicle charging stations, and storage.



Shogaabawiikwe Misty Nordin provided an opening ceremony and ground blessing for the new transportation facility.

FIBER TO HOME

\$8M of NTIA funding is being used to install 80 miles of fiber optic cable, which will bring broadband service and high-speed internet to all tribal homes, government programs, and businesses within Red Cliff jurisdiction. This also includes tribal member homes in the Town of Russell and within the Belanger Settlement. Mainline conduit and fiber has been installed, and Network Interface Devices continue to be installed to homes. This project will open up opportunities for the community to access more education, telehealth services, job opportunities, and economic growth.





FINANCES

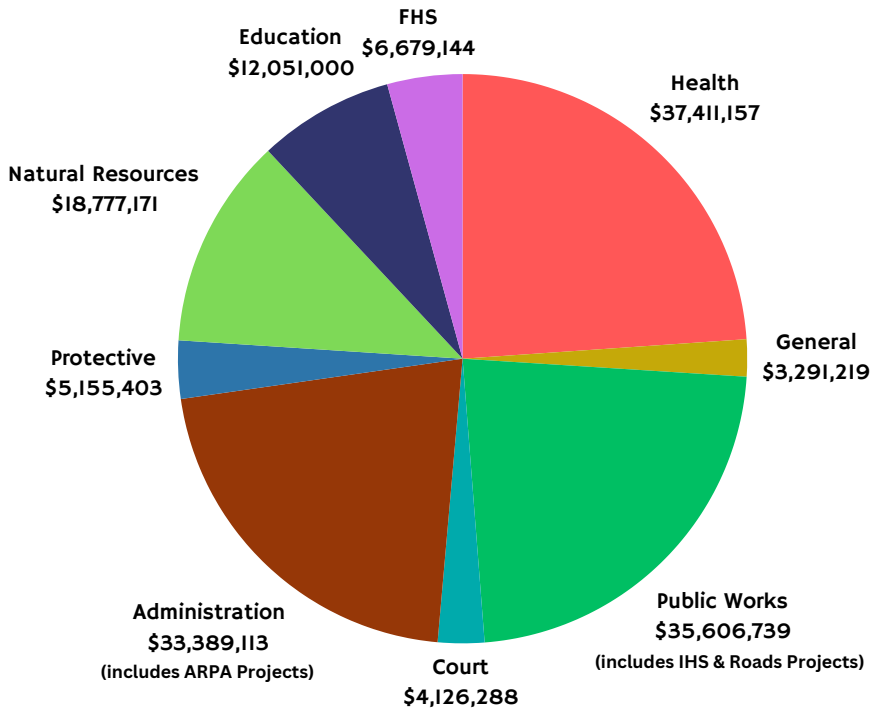
OPERATING EXPENSES

The Administration has made financial oversight and improving financial health a top priority. In FY24, fiscal operation goals included improving timely payments to vendors, completing the annual audit on time, recovering all funds available, and improving policies and staff development that support these priorities. The chart on the left shows the funds managed by each division in FY 2024, totaling \$156,487,234. This is an increase of over \$18M from FY 2023 divisional funding. The chart on the right shows the types of revenue coming in to the Tribe, including state and federal grants, tax and gaming revenue, and fund recovery.

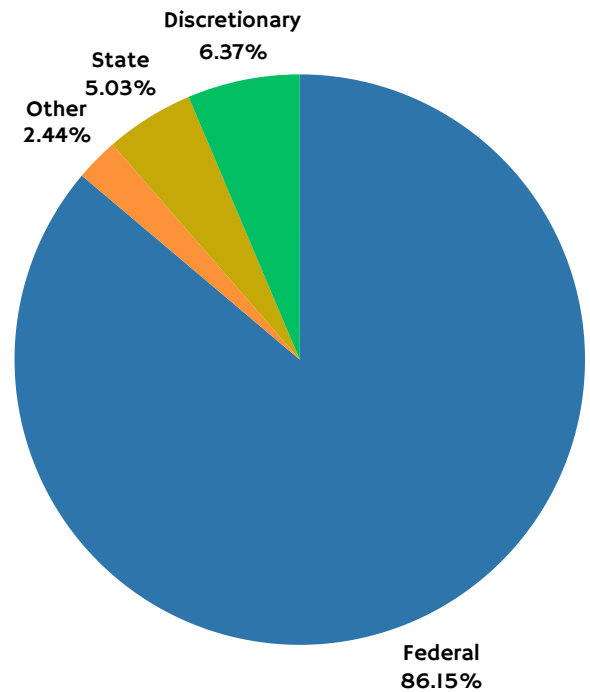
Economic Impact: The Tribe expended over \$19M in payroll along with \$44M in construction projects, showing the Tribe's commitment to providing sustainable job opportunities and support of trades work.

From the Treasurer's Office: "We are on track to have the 2024 audit submitted by the end of March 2025, well before the deadline. These audits are important for ensuring Tribal funds are accounted for and are spent appropriately."

**FY 2024
DIVISIONAL BUDGETS**



**FY 2024
FUNDING TYPES**



DEBT SERVICE

The Tribe continues to manage outstanding debts owed to and from borrowers. This includes a significant debt owed on Legendary Waters Resort and Casino from the very generous Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Nation. The following are debts owed and collected in FY24 as of 9/30/24:

- Water and Sewer owes to Rural Development - approx. \$971,000
- Health Center owes to Shakopee - approx. \$5.6M
- Legendary Waters owes to Tribe - approx. \$1.2M
- Legendary Waters owes to Shakopee - roughly \$36M
- Fish Company owes to Tribe - approx. \$250,000
- Business Development Corporation paid/collected by the Tribe - \$100,000. Owes approx. \$46,000





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COMMERCIAL ZONE MASTER PLAN

The Tribal Council adopted a Commercial Zone Master Plan on January 24, 2023 outlining the potential of the “commercial corridor,” a 2.5 mile-long area adjacent to Highway 13 where most of the existing commercial major visitor and community activity takes place.

The Plan included a master plan for the former 50-acre Isle Vista Casino shovel-ready commercial site and feasibility for the former Living Adventures site and new Buffalo Bay Store. The Plan will complement the work completed on the Economic Diversification Strategy adopted by Council in July 2021 focused on diversifying and sustaining funding, and building capacity.

The input collected on the **former Living Adventures site on Highway 13 north** was clear that the community is seeking safe access to the water and space for community gatherings. Plans to execute this are in process.

Planning for a **new Buffalo Bay Store** continued in 2024 with designs to expand and rebuild at the former Isle Vista site across from Legendary Waters. The new store is expected to provide fuel service kiosks, expanded grocery options with FoodShare capability, grab and go food options, apparel and gift store, seasonal merchandise, local vendor and artist merchandise, ATM, and public restrooms.

The BDC and Tribal Council are finalizing the financing for the project which is expected to break ground in 2025!

Former Isle Vista site schematic, view from Blueberry Road intersection





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Tribe hired a full time director to lead the Business Development Corporation, a key position in supporting several tribal enterprises and furthering business development efforts. The director plays an important role in revitalizing investment from private, commercial, and government resources.

The BDC employed 20 Red Cliff Tribal Members, providing nearly \$230K in payroll. The BDC was also able to clear debt from the old smoke shop.

Red Cliff Storage operates under the BDC to provide another revenue stream for the Tribe. BDC staff produced a dramatic turnaround for RC Storage. All 63 units are consistently filled with a waiting list of more than 20 people. Plans are being developed to add new units.

The BDC has been tasked with several exciting goals for the Tribe, some of which include a gallery business plan, gift and visitor center, and vending options beginning at the casino.

Former Isle Vista site schematic



Key

- 1 New Buffalo Bay Store (site approx. 1.2 ac)
- 2 Red Cliff Visitors & Information Center
- 3 Lodging
- 4 Village Green*
- 5 Retail/Tenant Space
- 6 Commercial/Community Use
- 7 Flexible Parking Area
- 8 Future Access to West Portion of Isle Vista Site
- 9 Improved Intersection at Hwy 13 & Blueberry Rd.
- 10 Boat/Trailer Staging & Temporary Parking
- 11 Potential Commercial Development
- 12 Extend Multi-Purpose Trail up to Fire Hall
- 13 Selective Trimming/Clearing

ENTREPRENEUR SUPPORT

In addition to Tribal-owned enterprises, staff have increased the amount of resources and information distributed to help Tribal Member entrepreneurs and small business owners.

A Small Business Entrepreneur Support group formed at the Red Cliff Library, and small business grant opportunities are regularly shared through the Tribe’s weekly newsletter.

More entrepreneur-specific resources and outreach is expected to launch in 2025. This administration recognizes the significant impact that tribal member-owned small business has on our community’s ability to thrive. The Tribe is committed to providing more resources and opportunities for both existing small business owners and for members who are interested in starting their own business. Entrepreneurs are able to have their business listed on the Tribe’s online business directory at no cost. To list your business, visit www.redcliff-nsn.gov/community/tourism





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LEGENDARY WATERS RESORT & CASINO

Legendary Waters continues to be a main gathering place for community events and meetings. Despite some challenges related to flooding in June, Legendary Waters was able to hit several benchmarks:

1. Slot revenue increased by 10%.
2. Hotel revenue increased by 11%.
3. Food & Beverage net sales remained steady after increasing by 40% in 2023.
4. Marina & Campground capacity remained full through the peak months.
5. Employed over 100 staff, providing significant work opportunities for the community.



The flooding incident caused considerable damage to the first floor of the property, extending to the administration area and the hotel, causing the pool and hot tub to close for six months.

This past year was a period of transition for Legendary Waters with several administrative changes, including the reorganizing of the marketing team and strategy with a retooling of the casino rewards program. A new Food & Beverage manager is overseeing the remodeling and rebranding of the restaurant, which will occur in several phases. Leadership is seeking a qualified candidate to serve as General Manager and for the Controller position to oversee the accounting department.

Looking to 2025, Legendary Waters will continue to modernize technology with the replacing of servers, software, and hardware. Indoor and outdoor property improvements, including an update of the gaming floor with different slot themes, is expected to provide a better experience for recurring customers and will attract new visitors to the property.

Legendary Waters continues to host its annual Winter Pow Wow along with events and live entertainment throughout the year.

Legendary Waters did a wonderful job of hosting our Red Cliff Days celebration, an annual event organized with the intent to celebrate community spirit and cultural diversity. Filled with excitement and entertainment for all age groups and open to the entire public, it's more than just a weekend excursion. Red Cliff Days is an experience of community, culture, and togetherness.



Chi-Miigwech

If you have any questions about what is in this Annual Report, please reach out to the Tribal Administration Building at 715-779-3700, attend a Tribal Council meeting, or email communications@redcliff-nsn.gov

Gaa-Miskwaabikaang thrives when we have active community members working to ensure our ancestors are honored and our future generations' needs are met.

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